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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MRS. JACKSON:—You ask us, "What is the use of a drawing-room in a house, anyhow, and if a comfortable home could not be established without any such room in the building?" We reply to your query by stating that the drawing-room is and must be essentially the best room in the house, and is invaluable as a teacher in fine manners to the inmates of the house. Fine manners are a necessity to civilized beings, and a certain amount of courtesy is maintained by the use of the room that is most finely decorated, that holds our dearest treasures, and that sees but little of the serious side of life. It is on such little things as these that our lives depend for comfort, and small habits, such as change of dress for evening wear, with a long skirt to give the proper drawing-room air, and the enforcement of the rule that cigars and slippers must never enter the best room, will be in harmony with the very atmosphere of the chamber, and will go a long way towards supporting politeness and that mutual respect that husband and wife should have for each other, and which is a surer means of happiness than anything else, because the foolish terms of endearment that belong to the honeymoon get rubbed off where life becomes full of anxieties and hurry.

As to furniture, we would advise you by all means to buy a piano for the drawing-room. We do not mean one of those black affairs that look like coffins, but a piano with the frame painted white or cream color, the panels having beautiful flowers. A very attractive piece of decorative drapery for the piano top can be made of sage green silk worked with rosebuds, or of turquoise blue silk worked with pale yellow flowers. A nice design is to have the front of the cover painted with dancing figures; but such a design must be gotten up or ordered by yourself, because the piano manufacturer seems to be the only man who refuses to march with the times, and makes no effort to improve the appearance of his manufactures. A good idea in the way of a piano seat is to have a square ottoman provided with a cushion. The interior of the ottoman holds a great deal of music, and the seat will not look badly if properly covered with a pretty material nailed on and trimmed with a fringe that serves the double purpose of being highly ornamental and hiding the opening of the box at the same time.

MRS. A. H. SMITH:—We would advise you to decorate the spare room by painting the woodwork and trimmings white, and covering the walls with the faintest possible shade of Nile green. The furniture should be of white wood, with green and white mats strewn about the floor. The curtains should be pink cretonne, and the bed might have an eider down quilt in pale pink silk. A brass bedstead, with a hair mattress on a wire mattress will be both nice and suitable in such a room. Everything should be sweet and attractive, so that when the friend arrives her exclamation will be, "Oh, what a sweet room! Why, I feel rested already."

ELSIE ANTHONY:—We do not know of a better wedding present than one of those low delightful wicker chairs, which can be bought anywhere for two dollars. It can be painted to match the room it is destined to be used in with Aspinall's invaluable enamel paints, which have a gloss upon them and can be applied at home and wear beautifully. You can very easily cushion the chair yourself by using a strong tapestry. The cushion should be tied in its place with strong tapes. It takes two and one-half yards double width material, or four and one-half single width to make a cushion for the sides and seat, and the cushion should be finished off with a frill two inches wide. The comfort of these chairs is much enhanced by the addition of a small, square soft cushion, which fills up the hollow of the center and fits into one's back. These can be easily made of paper torn up and rolled into strips and then put into a piece of twilled cotton for a case, and a second case can be made from the material saved from the chair covering itself.

MRS. GEORGE L. THOMAS:—Carpets may be cleaned very successfully without removing them from the floor. Indeed, if of the heavy varieties of texture, with the wool all thrown up on the right side, as in the velvets, the body Brussels and other weaves of linen thread warp, they can be cleaned more conveniently and satisfactorily when stretched on the floor than when taken up; and their removal once in four or five years to sweep away the dust which may have sifted through and accumulated under them, is all that is necessary, either for neatness or their preservation. For gathering up and removing the surface dust, sprinkle carpets thickly with Indian meal wetted only enough to prevent its flying away before the broom, and sweep carefully and vigorously with short, quick strokes of the broom. This repeated, with several applications of the slightly wetted meal, all the dust will be taken up, and the carpet will present a fresh and cleanly appearance. Then, for restoring the colors, should they be faded, sprinkle the carpet thickly with slightly dampened table salt, and again sweep thoroughly and briskly.

For cleaning and restoring Chinese mattings. Have at hand water heated several degrees above the tepid point, and pouring off in a large bucket, mix with meal and salt in a quantity sufficient to thicken it slightly. Dip in the water a coarse, stout cloth (a salt sack, well washed, or a coffee bag, is excellent for the purpose), and wringing out the water as thoroughly as possible, go over the matting vigorously, repeating the process several times if necessary. In this way every spot may be removed, and the matting restored almost to original freshness.

Ingrain, three-ply, and other double-faced carpetings, of both warp and wool of wool, should be taken up from the floor, beaten and well shaken, at least once a year, because they are more apt to be cut and worn by the dust than carpetings of closer texture and single-face; and the cleansing and restoring process may be resorted to when they are relaxed. Beef's gall will restore any color, and beef's gall mixed with warm water is excellent for restoring faded carpets, piano and table covers and the like; but before applying the gall-charged water

the dust must be thoroughly removed from any article, as the gall is somewhat glutinous and prepares the goods to hold the dust only the more securely.

LOUISE J. SAUNDERS:—If you would have the bed-room of your young daughter altogether unique, pleasing, and refreshing, have the ceiling preserved in some light and cheerful design, and the walls tinted a clear shade of rose color, and hung with white cottage muslin. Let the muslin be thin and clear, but of firm texture. Apply it to the walls tuted, or in box plaits, and for a frieze festooning the muslin around the room, with a heading of moulding of mixed gold and silver. Have curtains of the muslin over rose color, overhung by festooned lambrequins; and loop back the curtains with rose-colored ribbons. The standing furniture should be of white enamelled wood, or what is more desirable, of the beautiful Chinese rattan which is now so much in favor; with chairs and a sofa of the rattan heaped with cushions covered with the muslin over rose-color. Dainty muslin draperies may hang over the toilet mirror and the mantel shelf, and all the ornaments about the room should be of a delicate character. Should you have the furniture of the white enamelled wood, you can have one or two easy chairs, and the lounge, upholstered in rose-color under the white muslin. Instead of frescoing the ceiling, you might have it overlaid with a specially devised design of the tapestry, which is now painted in so perfect imitations of fresco; or you might have the ceiling tinted, as recommended for the walls, with the muslin drapery gathered to a cluster in the center, and drawn out smoothly at the extremities. Should you decide to tint and drape the ceiling, finish the work with a great rosette in the center, through which must run the pipe of the chandelier; and for the chandelier there may be suggested one of those exquisite Venetian glass productions, which look so much like frost work.

CLEMENTINE PLEASANTS:—There seems to be scarcely an end to devices in wall pockets. Among the most noticeable of the late fancies in these useful little household appendages, are those made on palm-leaf fans for a foundation. The binding ripped from the edge of the fans, the edge is cut in acute points between the ribs, and around each notch formed by cutting the points there is laid a strand of silk flosselle, or of double zephyr wool, of some approved color, with a strand of gold, or of silver tinsel cord, or several strands of tinsel thread, these confined around the middle rib of the fan. The pockets are of card board, buckram, or some other suitable stiff material, covered with China silk satin, velvet plush, linen drilling, or any fabric devoted to purposes of the kind, and is fastened at the edge of the fan with finish of crochetwork, lace, quilled ribbon or silk cord; or what would be more effective, there may be a fringe of mock coins, crescents, stars, blossoms, or other of the metal trimmings for fancy work to be found in shops in which embroidery materials are kept. The pocket is of semi-circular or crescent shape, and must be cut sufficiently wide at the top to spring out considerably from the fan. Beautiful effects are attained by painting or embroidering the pocket.

The fan of a handsome wall-pocket made of satin in a medium tone of sea-green, is striped with silk flosselle in green and gold tinsel cord, and on the pocket is painted a map of cyclamens. A second pocket made of cream-white china silk is sprinkled all over with embroidered buttercups, and trimmed with bows of satin ribbon at each side, in buttercup-yellow. China silk of printed design is frequently chosen for making these wall pockets.

JULIA F. JOHNSTON:—Japanese folding fans are sometimes used for the frieze effect in the place of bordering paper. They may be bought by the quantity at a very low price, and when judiciously used they afford a pleasing and unique variety in wall decoration. A wall, in memory, hung with plain repp paper of a medium tone of stone-blue, has a heading of Japanese folding fans in the many colors and designs in which they come, the fans tilted diagonally, and confined on the wall with invisible tacks. A second room hung with paper in a pale tone of terra cotta color, has a frieze of fans set square, the fans confined in place with tacks having large fancy brass heads. The use of the Japanese fans for a frieze is certainly an improvement upon their substitution for pictures.

ELIA:—Among the most recent fancies which have appeared in squares and scarfs for the dinner and tea-tables, are those in which the point lace and the *punto tirato* stitches have been introduced into the embroidery. To effect this idea, the designs must be large and open, in leaves, for example, or flowers with large petals, so that the leaf or the petal may be cut out, to be filled in with the thread work. The point lace stitches referred to are all done as is the button-hole stitch, and great variety of arrangement can be introduced in them—cobwebs, shells, blocks, and other figures being readily effected. After filling in with the point lace stitches, the design is completed by overcasting the edge of the figures. For filling in the leaves with the *punto tirato* embroidery, the threads are crossed to form warp and woof, and the desired design is darned in.

An elegant table scarf, in illustration, is in a design of clustered chestnut leaves, the leaves filled in with various point-lace stitches and finished with olive green overcasting, in the serrated effects seen in the natural leaves. A still more charming table square is embroidered in a design of large lilies with city leaves. The blossoms are filled in with point lace stitches and finished with overcasting in white of silk flosselle, and the leaves and stems are done in olive green. A very handsome table square to be used under the fruit bowl is wrought in a design of oranges and orange blossoms within a border of *punto tirato* work. Clusters of two or three small oranges, done in close work in orange shades, with a few leaves done in the outline stitch, fill in the corners of the square, and between them are clusters of orange blossoms done in white silk, with a few leaves in olive in the outline stitch. The border in drawn work is about two inches wide, edged on each side with a row of the feathered stitch done in white silk, and for a finish to this square is a row of the feather stitch heading trimming of Florentine lace, three inches wide. Lace is much used now for trimming fine drapery. It is preferred to fringe on napery, because it is quite as showy and much more easily laundered.